How can the church serve during the Covid 19 Virus

I recently heard a news broadcast from the Health Minister of Uganda. She had great advice for how to respond to COVID-19. She said, “Let us pray and fast and look to God to heal our nation and let’s learn as much as we can from science about how to protect our people and prepare for a possible increase in cases.”

That is great advice. I would suggest there are four things that we as the church can be doing to serve others at this time

**Fast and Pray**

**“**if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land” (2 Chronicles 7:14).

God has promised, as we turn to Him, humble ourselves, pray, and seek His face, He WILL hear, He will forgive our sins, and He will heal our land. More than ever, we need God’s intervention in our lives. Like Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20, we are facing an enemy too big for us. Like Jehoshaphat we need to fast and pray, looking to God. We must know that the battle belongs to God and not us.

**Share the Gospel**

People are desperate for hope and peace. It is a great time to be sharing with people the source of our hope and peace. Let them know why we do not need to fear even in the midst of the storm: we have God with us. He has promised us that, for those of us who love Him, He will work all things together for good.

**Meet practical needs**
It’s really hard to be generous right now when things are so uncertain. In Isaiah 58 verse 10-11, Isaiah tells us that, if we spend ourselves on behalf of the hungry, God will satisfy our needs. It’s hard but it’s important; our communities need God’s love. More people are facing extreme need than ever before. What can you do to help those who suddenly find themselves without work or food to eat?

If you are in areas with many COVID-19 cases then also think about the elderly. Those 70 and over have been the worst impacted. What can you do to make sure they don’t have too much contact with people but aren’t lonely? Maybe you can go to the market for them and chat with them - while sitting two meters away. Think of ways to make sure that if someone is sick that the elderly are kept away from them; this may take creativity in small homes.

What are other groups that might need help? Ask God for ideas on how to help while you are in lockdown. His word promises that when we ask for wisdom, He gives it generously (James 1: 5).

**Teach health practices**

Just because we are trusting God doesn’t mean we don’t need to teach our communities good health practices. That would be as crazy as saying it was okay for a blind man to drive a car because God will keep him safe. Trusting God doesn’t mean we throw out all wisdom. God is able to work through scientists to give us the information we need. Here are some tips for staying healthy through COVID-19 (you can practice them yourself and teach them to others):

* Since COVID-19, like other viruses, can be passed when we cough, sneeze, or breathe on each other, we can help stop its spread simply by staying 2 meters away from others. For this season, we can protect ourselves and others by not hugging, holding hands, or standing too close. When we cough, we should cough into our elbows not hands.
* Washing hands with soap is one of the most proven ways to prevent the spread of sickness. Germs that cause sickness, including COVID-19, can be transferred from anything we touch to our mouths, eyes and noses, where they can get inside our bodies and make us sick. So teaching handwashing, practicing handwashing, and making sure even the poorest have access to soap are three excellent ways to help yourself and others stay healthy.
* Do not drink or eat out of the same dishes as others. Germs that cause COVID-19 and other sicknesses can transfer from one person to another very easily when we share dishes and utensils. Make sure that each person has their own dish and that those dishes are washed with soap and dried in the sun each time they are used.
* Eat lots of colorful fruits and vegetables. God created fruits and vegetables with many vitamins that help our bodies fight off sickness. Those with strong bodies have milder symptoms of COVID-19 and recover more quickly. Could you grow a garden? Share your harvest? Buy vegetables at the market for an elderly neighbour?